BRITISH COLUMBIA

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highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

The Economy

- **There were 724 consumer bankruptcies in the province in October, an increase of 20.5% over the same month of 1998.** Consumer bankruptcies in the province have begun to climb. October's increase was the third double-digit jump in three months. Nationally, consumer bankruptcies were up 1.3% (to 6,194) as large increases in the number of bankruptcies in Saskatchewan (+23.3%), BC and Alberta (+13.6%) were offset by declines in most other provinces. In Ontario, the number of consumer bankruptcies edged up 1.7%, to 1,946. *Source: Industry Canada*

- **After declining in four of the previous five months, the number of business bankruptcies registered in BC was virtually unchanged (+1.3%) in October.** There were 77 business bankruptcies, compared to 76 in the same month of 1998. Nationally, business bankruptcies were down 16.6%, as the number of business failures fell in all but two provinces. *Source: Industry Canada*

- **Business at BC restaurants, caterers and drinking establishments slowed last year.** Their revenues reached $4.5 billion in 1999, 3.7% less than in 1998, when earnings totalled $4.6 billion. The decline in revenues was the first since 1991.

  Drinking places saw their revenues fall 7.3% in 1999, after posting increases of nearly 20% in each of the two previous years. Restaurants, caterers, and other eating establishments fared a little better, with revenues declining only 3.4%. Full-service restaurants (-7.9%) and food service contractors (-5.6%) both saw business drop off from 1998. However, fast-food outlets, take-outs, and cafeteria-style restaurants (+2.9%) escaped the general malaise, as did caterers, whose revenues were up 17.9%. Nationally, revenues of restaurants, caterers and taverns rose 4.3% last year, after increasing 8.1% in 1998.

  Full-service restaurants account for about half of all sales at eating and drinking establishments in BC, with fast food, take-outs and cafeteria style restaurants earning 36% of the revenues. Food service contractors and caterers together account for about 7% of sales, and the remaining 8% goes to bars and taverns. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Earnings of Men and Women

- **During the last two decades, wage disparities between men and women working full-year, full-time have been shrinking.** In 1997, the female to male earnings ratio in BC was 72.9%, compared to 67.1% in 1980. Most of the improvement has occurred since 1988, when the ratio bottomed out at 61.6%. In Victoria, the earnings ratio for full-time full-year workers has risen from 68.6% to 83.9% during the period since 1980, giving the capital city the highest female-to-male earnings ratio of any metropolitan area in the country. The ratio in Vancouver was 73.8%. Nationally the female to male earnings ratio was 72.5% in 1997. *Source: SC, Catalogue13F0022XCB*

Housing

- **The number of housing starts in BC plunged 38.8% (seasonally adjusted) between December and January.** January starts were at their lowest level in fifteen years. The downturn was attributed to low multiple family construction following an unanticipated burst of activity at the end of last year. Despite the volatility in multiple starts, housing starts are expected to improve during 2000, as population growth in the province begins to pick up.

Report **New measures of international migration**

Did you know...

Nearly $5.5 million of fresh-cut roses were imported into Canada in February 1998. That's about three times as many roses as in other months of the year. Columbia is the top supplier of roses to Canadian florists, with imports totaling nearly $11 million in 1998. Other rose exporting countries include Ecuador (nearly $6 million), the US ($2 million), Guatemala ($1 million) and Mexico ($1 million).

Housing starts were down in most parts of the country last month, falling 7.3% nationally. BC posted the biggest decline of any province, but Ontario (-9.0%), Quebec (-6.5%) and Alberta (-4.7%) also saw new housing construction slow in January. In contrast, housing starts soared in Saskatchewan (+45.5%) and three of the four Atlantic provinces.

Source: Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation

- **The cost of new housing in the province continued its long downward slide in December.** The New Housing Price Index (NHPI) for Victoria was down 5.8% from the same month of 1998, while Vancouver's NHPI fell 2.2%. Although the decline in new house prices in Victoria shows little sign of abating, Vancouver's new housing market may be starting to bottom out. December's decline in the NHPI was the smallest since mid-1997. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **During 1999, the cost of new housing in Vancouver fell 4.1%, while Victoria's NHPI dropped 5.0% over the course of the year.** New house prices in Vancouver were 16% lower than in 1992, while the cumulative drop in Victoria prices was 25%. In contrast, Canadian new house prices stayed remarkably stable during the 1990s. The cost of new housing was only 1% higher last year than it had been in 1992. New house prices in BC have been falling since 1994, and this has offset the effect of rising prices in other parts of Canada. *Source: Statistics Canada*

RRSPs

- **Just over a third (36%) of Canadian taxfilers bought RRSPs in 1997.** This compares to 32% who invested in RRSPs at the beginning of the decade. In 1997, the average contribution was $3,936, almost a thousand dollars more than the average contribution ($3,005) in 1991. The increase in RRSP contributions (+31%) was much higher than the 4% growth in average weekly earnings during this period. RRSP contributions by Canadians totalled $24.1 billion in 1997–only 14% of the $176.4 billion that Canadians could have contributed to RRSPs in that year. Employees (43%) were more likely than self-employed people (35%) to make contributions to an RRSP.

Perhaps not surprisingly, RRSP participation rates tend to increase with income levels and age. Only one in 20 taxfilers with an annual income of less than $10,000 bought RRSPs. Among those with incomes of $80,000 or more, 18 out of 20 put money into RRSPs. Forty-five to fifty-four year olds were the most likely to buy RRSPs, followed by people in the 35–44 age group.

Source: SC . Catalogue 75-001-XPE. Spring 2000

- **RRSP behaviour is not necessarily consistent from year to year.** A recent study found that among taxfilers aged 25 to 64, more than 40% made no contribution between 1991 and 1997. Of those who did contribute, only a quarter did so consistently. A third were occasional contributors (buying RRSPs in one, two or three years) while the remainder bought RRSPs in most, but not all, years from 1991 to 1997.

SC. Catalogue 75-001-XPE. Spring 2000

Air Charters

- **During 1998, 2.2 million passengers traveled between Canada and southern destinations (excluding those in the US) on charter flights.** The most popular charter markets in 1998 were Mexico (880,121 passengers), the Dominican Republic (388,111), Cuba (360,133) and the Netherlands Antilles (106,340). These four destinations accounted for more than three-quarters of all southbound charter traffic in 1998.

  Europe was the second-most popular charter destination, with 1.8 million passengers travelling to or from the Old World by this means. The UK (769,256 passengers) was the most common charter destination in Europe. Another 335,911 passengers travelled between Canada and France. More than a million passengers also used charter air services to travel within the country, while smaller numbers flew to other destinations such as the US (269,613), Asia (22,196) or the Pacific (14,117). *Source: SC, Catalogue 51-004-XIB*

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For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

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Infoline Report: New measures of international migration

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Originally published in Third Quarter 1999 issue, *Migration Highlights*. Annual subscription: $30 + GST

Summary

On a conceptual basis, net international migration to British Columbia consists of the difference between the number of people arriving in the province from outside Canada on either a permanent (immigration) or temporary basis (non-permanent residents) and the number of people leaving the province for other countries (total net emigration). The measurement of people entering Canada is based on relatively good administrative data, but the estimation of people leaving the country has been based on weaker data sources and assumptions. Statistics Canada has recently developed an improved method of estimating total net emigration from Canada, which includes permanent emigrants less emigrants who return to Canada plus a new measure of the change in the number of people temporarily out of the country.

Following the 1996 Census, there were indications that the estimates of one or more of the components of population change were likely deficient. This followed from the fact that the 1996 population of Canada (as measured by the census and adjusted for net undercoverage) was considerably lower than the corresponding population estimates. This divergence was also greater than had been the case following either the 1986 or 1991 Censuses. Based on knowledge of the sources and methods used for each of the components of population and supported by information from the 1996 Reverse Record Check (RRC)[1], the measurement of net emigration seemed the most likely area requiring improvement.

[1] The Reverse Record Check is a sample survey carried out following each census to estimate the number of people missed by the census and also those who were counted more than once.

Definitions

Permanent emigrants are Canadian citizens or landed immigrants who leave the country without an intention to return.

Returning emigrants are Canadian citizens or landed immigrants who emigrated from the country and who subsequently returned to Canada to re-establish a permanent residence.

Temporarily abroad are those whose stay abroad is from six months to two years and whose intention of returning is unknown OR those whose stay abroad is longer than six months but who intend to return.

Prior to the new measures, which are being introduced with this release, the estimates of permanent emigration and returning Canadians were based on outdated data sources and assumptions. In addition, no estimate was made for people moving to another country on a temporary basis, with an implicit assumption being made that there has been little change in its magnitude over time. However, there are indications that there has been an upward trend in the number of people temporarily abroad, partly as a result of freer trade and increasing globalization. Also from a conceptual point of view, it would be consistent to exclude people temporarily abroad from the population, since non-permanent residents (people in Canada on a temporary basis) are included in the Canadian population.

Permanent Emigrants

The new measure for this component starts with data on the **emigration of children** (ages 0 to 17) as identified by the Child Tax Benefit (CTB) program. Since CTB is not a universal program, the data must be adjusted to represent the complete child population and also for the

differential propensity to emigrate of children receiving benefits compared to those not covered.

Emigration of adults is measured by using U.S. data on immigration of Canadians to the United States, as well as an indirect estimate of adults emigrating to other countries. The indirect estimate is determined by first calculating the number of children emigrating to other countries by subtracting the children emigrating to the U.S. from the total of all child emigrants. An adult to children ratio of 1.1 (based on information from various administrative data sources) is then used to calculate the number of adult emigrants from the number of child emigrants to other countries.

The provincial/territorial distribution of all permanent emigrants is determined from the distribution of CTB data on child emigrants.

Returning Emigrants

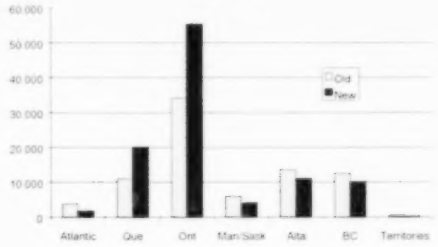
Estimates of **returning child emigrants** follow the same approach as is used to produce estimates of child emigrants from the CTB information.

The number of **returning adult emigrants** is estimated by applying an adult to children ratio (calculated from income tax information) to the estimate of returning child emigrants.

The provincial/territorial distribution of all returning emigrants is determined from the distribution of CTB data on returning child emigrants.

The following chart compares the net effect of the changes to emigration less returning emigrants at the provincial level over the 1996-1999 period. The impact of the changes differs considerably by province with net emigration from Ontario and Quebec being much higher, and from British Columbia and Alberta, somewhat lower.

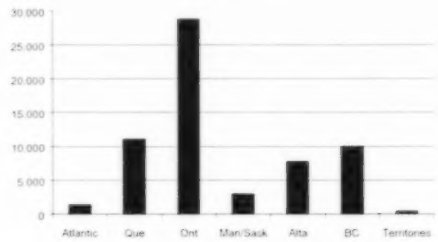
Emigrants - Returning Emigrants
1996-1999



Temporarily Abroad

Temporarily abroad is defined in a way that is consistent with the census definition (see text box on previous page). The new estimates of temporarily abroad were developed using an extrapolation of information from the 1991 and 1996 RRC on those who were temporarily absent from Canada at the time of each census. The provincial/ territorial distribution derived from the 1996 RRC is maintained constant.

Net Temporarily Abroad
1996-1999



Based on extrapolation of the RRC information, the number of Canadians who were temporarily out of the country at any one time increased by 62,000 between 1996 and 1999. Ontario accounted for 46% of the net change in persons

temporarily abroad, Quebec for 18%, British Columbia for 16% and Alberta for 12%.

Conclusion

The new methods have the effect of reducing the Canadian population as of July 1, 1999 by 83,000 persons (62,000 in net temporarily abroad plus 21,000 in net permanent emigration). For B.C. the reduction is 7,600 persons (10,000 in net temporarily abroad less 2,400 in net permanent emigration).

For Canada as a whole, the revision to the methods, as discussed above, would have the effect of reducing the difference between the census-based population measure and the component-based population estimates[2]. At the provincial level, there would also have been a substantial reduction in the differences between these measures for Ontario and Quebec. However, for British Columbia where the 1996 Census-based measure of population was considerably higher than the component-based population estimates, the new methodology would actually have the effect of increasing the discrepancy between the two measures. Other reasons for this divergence remain to be investigated.

Note: Refer to Table 2 of this release for the quarterly estimates of B.C. population and its components.

Recent Feature Articles from Migration Highlights

Jun	1996	Migration and Housing Demand
Sep	1996	Regional Migration
Dec	1996	Retirement in B.C.
Mar	1997	B.C. Migration - Outlook for 1997
Jun	1997	Indian Reserves in British Columbia
Sep	1997	Where do the Young and Old Live?
Jan	1998	Migration and Housing Demand
Mar	1998	B.C. Migration - Outlook for 1998
Jun	1998	Mobility and Migration between 1991 and 1996
Sep	1998	How many people were missed in the Census
Dec	1998	Where We Work and How We Get There.
Apr	1999	B.C. Migration – Outlook for 1999
Jun	1999	Regional Migration Outlook
Sep	1999	Does moving to another province increase your income?

[2] This difference is referred to as the error of closure and is a measure of the quality of the population estimates produced by Statistics Canada.

Infoline

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fax transmission information service from **BC STATS**

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Oct 1/99	% change on one year ago
BC	4,037.2	0.8
Canada	30,572.5	0.8
GDP and INCOME		
(BC - at market prices)	1998	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	110,948	-0.2
GDP *($ 1992 millions)*	99,708	0.2
GDP *($ 1992 per Capita)*	24,908	-0.8
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1992 per Capita)*	15,969	-1.6
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Nov	3,171	8.5
Merchandise Exports (raw) Nov	2,316	6.1
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Nov	2,807	3.0
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		
(all items - 1992=100)	Dec '99	% change on one year ago
BC	111.6	1.7
Canada	111.5	2.6
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		
(seasonally adjusted)	Jan '00	% change on one year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,088	0.6
Employed - BC	1,936	1.8
Unemployed - BC	152	-12.2
		Jan '99
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	7.3	8.3
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	6.8	7.9
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Feb 9/00	Feb 10/99
Prime Business Rate	6.75	6.75
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	7.60	6.40
- 5 year	8.55	6.90
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Feb 9/00	Feb 10/99
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.4444	1.4935
US $ *(reciprocal of the closing rate)*	0.6921	0.6715
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Dec '99	% change on one year ago
BC	635.95	1.4
Canada	604.46	3.5

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bank-banque-canada.ca/english/wfsgen.htm

Demographic profile of BC

New on our web site is a detailed profile of British Columbia based on 1996 Census results. We have reorganised the data, calculated distributions and provided a summary index of the PDF document to help you sort through the 15 pages of information. Many tables feature a male/female split. The top 52 ethnic origins are presented in two sorts: one based on single origins and another based on total (single and multiple) origins.

To find the *British Columbia Census Profile* choose **New Releases** on our home page or go through the **Census** button or go directly to

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/DATA/CEN96/C96INDEX.HTM [continued]

Released this week by BC STATS

- Labour Force Statistics, January 2000

Next week

- No subscription releases

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